

## The Story of a Book

She awoke in an unfamiliar room, in a city she had lived in ten years before. The small apartment belonged to a Portuguese friend from that time who was temporarily away travelling in Vietnam. From one window was a view of water towers perched precariously on rooftops, each a different shape, and with differing degrees of peeling paint and rust. From another she could see the towering spire of the Empire State Building which in her childhood had been famous as the tallest building in the world and remained an omnipresent monument, soaring free above the chaos of the street.

Later in the morning, she walked through Greenwich Village to Broadway, captivated once again by the noise, movement, heat, colours, lights, smells and gleaming façades of Manhattan. In July the city was almost tropically hot and humid. Inside the stores and buses the air-conditioning was cold and dry, expelling more heat to the street outside. In one such store she became enthralled by the array of papers and paints. She bought sheets of seven different colours, one for each day she would be alone in the city. She bought little bottles of gouache, a brush, a block of rubber, and a knife for cutting.

In the silence of the apartment in the evening, she would commence her work: cutting a quick simple gesture into the surface of the rubber block, and then repeatedly painting the surface with the gouache and printing the block on the paper, blue on blue, red on red, yellow on yellow, etc., the tone and the texture of the ink creating the minutest variation of the surface of the paper.

There would be no text, no pictures or illustrations. She would make a book of her presence in that place.

Her book would be the silent sound of an individual in a deafening city of millions.

Matthew Browne

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